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WATER CONSERVATION CHECKLIST

Check to see how your water conservation habits rate.

Check your toilet for leaks.

A leak in your toilet may be wasting more than 100 gallons of water a day. To check, put a little food coloring in your toilet tank. If, without flushing, the coloring begins to appear in the bowl, you have a leak. Adjust or replace the flush valve or call a plumber.

Stop using your toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket.

Every time you flush a cigarette butt, facial tissue or other small bit of trash down the toilet, you waste five to seven gallons of water.

Put a plastic bottle in your toilet tank.

Your toilet can probably flush just as efficiently with less water than it now uses. To cut down water waste, put an inch or two of sand or pebbles in a plastic quart bottle to weight it down. Fill the bottle with water and then put it in your toilet tank, safely away from the operating mechanisms. In an average home, the bottle may displace 10 gallons or more of water a day. Note: Never put a brick in the toilet. Bricks tend to disintegrate in the water and can damage plumbing.

Take shorter showers.

Long, hot showers waste five to ten gallons of water every unneeded minute. Limit your showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down and rinse off.

Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors.

Most shower heads put out five to ten gallons of water per minute. Your local hardware or plumbing supply store stocks inexpensive, water-saving shower heads that use less than 3 gallons per minute. New technology and design of the low flow shower heads means you won't even notice the difference - except on your water bill.

Turn off the water after you wet your toothbrush.

After you have wet your toothbrush and filled a glass for rinsing your mouth, there is no need to keep water pouring down the drain.

Rinse your razor in the sink.

Before shaving, partially fill your sink with a few inches of warm water. This will rinse your blade just as efficiently as running water, and far less wastefully.

Use your automatic dishwasher only for full loads.

Every time you run your dishwasher, you use about 25 gallons of water.

If you wash dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing.

If you have two sinks, fill one with soapy water and one with rinse water. If you have one sink, gather all the washed dishes in the dish rack and rinse them with an inexpensive spray device.

Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables.

Put a stopper in the sink and fill the sink with clean water.

Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator.

This ends the wasteful practice of running tap water to cool it off for drinking.

Use your automatic washing machine for full loads only.

Your automatic washer uses 30 to 35 gallons of water in a cycle. Most automatic washers have a water level regulator. To save water, use the appropriate setting.
Plant drought-resistant trees and plants.

There are many beautiful trees and plants that thrive in Texas with far less watering than other species.

Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants.

A layer of mulch will slow the evaporation of moisture.

Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks and steps.

Using a hose to push around a few leaves and scraps of paper can waste hundreds and hundreds of gallons of water.

Don't run the hose while washing your car.

Soap down your car with a pail of soapy water. Then use a hose just to rinse it off.
Water your lawn only when it needs it.

You don't have to water on a set schedule.

Watering frequently can actually damage your lawn. A good way to see if your lawn needs watering is to step on some grass. If the grass springs back up, you don't need to water. If it stays flat, it time to water.

Deep-soak your lawn.

Don't sprinkle. A good soaking gets to the "root" of the problem by encouraging deep, solid root growth.

Water during the cool parts of the day.

Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.
Properly position your sprinklers.

Direct the spray in such a way that water lands on your lawn or garden, not on concrete, where it does no good. Avoid watering on windy days when much of your water may be carried off before it ever hits the ground.

Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings.

Even a small drip can waste 50 or more gallons of water a day. Larger leaks can waste thousands of gallons.